THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) The Government has not yet decided to constitute a regulatory Commission for coal on the lines of the similar commission constituted for Power and Telecommunication.

(b) Does not arise in view of answer given in part (a) of the question

Setting up of Kiosks under Saksham Project

2727. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

whether the Microsoft Corporation has announced their rural initiative "Saksham" under which the company would partner with NGOs to roll out 50,000 kiosks over the next three years;

if so, the details thereof; and

the details of such kiosks which are proposed to be set up in Orissa with the Central assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) to (c) there are media reports about "Saksham" initiative of Microsoft. This initiative is entirely of the company without the Government's involvement.

Disbursal of USO fund for rural telephony

2728. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that Government have expressed dissatisfaction at slow progress of the disbursal of Universal Service Obligation Fund for rural telephony;

whether it is a fact that the scheme is taking too long to reach the take off stage and the slow progress of disbursal is harming Government's plan to ensure 200 million mobile subscribers by the year 2007; and

if so, the efforts Government propose to make to ensure the scheme is implemented expeditiously?

1HE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. As per the Indian Telegraph Act, mobile services are not covered under Universal Service Obligation (USO), which is only for basic services. The year-wise details of the funds allocated and utilized in the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) are as under:—

Year	Fund allocated (Rupees in Crores)	Fund Utilized (Rupees in Crores)
2002-03	300.00	300.00
2003-04	200.00	200.00
2004-05	1314.585	1314.585
2005-06	1766.85	1766.85

(c) The Government has considered the issue of supporting infrastructure for providing cellular services in rural.and remote areas of the country. To enable such support, the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 needs to be suitably amended. Consultations have been held with theAccess Service Providers, Infrastructure Providers, Association of Telecom Service Providers and Manufacturers on this subject and comments have also been submitted by them in this regard. The proposal provides for subsidy for both active and passive infrastructure like tower, Base Transceiver Station (BTS), antennae and power supply.

Cost of money orders

2729. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

whether Government have any plans to reduce the existing cost of money orders;

if so, the steps proposed to make the system of money orders speedy, efficient and economical;

the steps taken by Government during the last six months to make money orders commercially viable and attractive to the public;